

**COME
INTO THE
TOWER**

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Dec. 21, 2014

Sermon in a sentence: Run into the “Jesus Tower” to find complete safety and salvation.

Scriptures: 2 Samuel 22:1-3; Proverbs 18:10; Micah 5:2,4-5a; Micah 4:1-8; Luke 2:1-20; Psalm 61:1-4

The use and value of towers is shown on a number of occasions in the OT. All the way back to the aftermath of the Flood, Nimrod and his colleagues decided they needed to build a city and a tower to make a name for themselves and maintain their presence in the land of Shinar (Gen. 10:8-10; 11:4). This building came to be known as the Tower of Babel, (meaning ‘confusion of sounds or voices’), because it actually led to confusion and dispersion, the exact opposite of what Nimrod had intended (Gen. 11:9).

In the book of Judges, we read about Gideon, a weak and timid man who God used to deliver Israel. After his death, his son Abimelech, (the son of a Shechemite concubine), rose up against his brothers, killed seventy of them and took the reigns of power with the help of relatives on his mother’s side (Ju. 8:31; 9:5-6). After ruling three years, the Lord sent strife between him and his relatives and they went to war with each other. The Shechemites had built a great tower into which their leaders ran for protection when

Abimelech came to fight against them. Abimelech burned the tower, with the leaders inside, killing about 1,000 people. Unfortunately for them, the tower was not of much value for their protection.

Throughout Kings and Chronicles, various other towers are mentioned as important components of the defense system of Israelite cities (e.g. 2 Kg. 9:17; 17:9; 18:8; 1 Ch. 27:25; 2 Ch. 14:7; 32:5).

King David fought many wars, endured great hardships and unfairness and finally, late in life, came to a place of peace and rest. He wrote a psalm that is good for us to consider as we continue our discussion of the importance of towers:

2 Samuel 22:1-3 (NKJV) Then David spoke to the LORD the words of this song, on the day when the LORD had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. ² And he said: "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; ³ The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; my Savior, You save me from violence.

So David knew the importance of towers, but his was not a tower made by man, but the tower of Jehovah God Himself! His son Solomon put it this way:

Proverbs 18:10 (NKJV) The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.



Many of us are familiar with the prophecy recorded in the book of Micah, specifying the birth of Jesus in the town of Bethlehem.

Micah 5:2 NKJV “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth *are* from of old, from everlasting.”

Bethlehem was not a huge town in Jesus’ day, probably having a population somewhere close to 600 people. Many more people than normal were in town due to the census, and Mary and Joseph were trying to squeeze in along with everyone else. When the time came for Mary to deliver her child, there was no room for them in the inn (Luke 2:7).

The word translated ‘inn’ (katalyma) only appears three times in the NT and in both other cases (Lk. 22:11; Mk. 14:14), it is translated ‘guest room’.

Thus, it is quite likely that Mary and Joseph had tried to find lodging with a distant relative living in Bethlehem, but when it came time for Jesus to be born, other relatives were in the guest room, forcing Mary and Joseph to find somewhere else to go for Jesus to be delivered.

We certainly know that Bethlehem was the town in which Jesus was to be born, and in Micah 4:6-8, we are given another clue as to exactly where His birth would take place:

Micah 4:6-8 (NKJV) "In that day," says the LORD,
"I will assemble the lame,
I will gather the outcast
And those whom I have afflicted;

7 I will make the lame a remnant,
And the outcast a strong nation;
So the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion
From now on, even forever.

8 And you, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the
daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, even the former
dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of
Jerusalem."

The Lord, who would reign forever in Mount Zion (v.7), would come to the place described in v. 8 as the "tower of the flock", "Migdal-eder" in Hebrew. ("Migdal": "tower"; "eder": "flock".)

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As many shepherders had done before them, the shepherds in Bethlehem had built a tower to protect themselves and their sheep, a lookout against raiders, a place of shelter, and a place for them to help ewes give birth in inclement weather. Lots of things could be done outdoors, but especially in winter, the tower was a wonderful asset.

As there were living quarters in most towers, it would not have been strange for Mary and Joseph to stay at Migdal-eder if there was "no room in the inn". (Quite possibly, one of Joseph's relatives had arranged this accommodation for them. The scriptures give us no indication they were going door to door looking for a place for Mary to give birth to the Messiah!)

Think of the significance of Jesus being born in *that* tower and laid in *that* manger. For centuries, young lambs had been offered up as sin sacrifices to God – losing their lives – shedding their blood, as the payment for human sin. Perfect, spotless lambs were required: the perfect lamb substituting for imperfect humans.

People came from all over Israel to offer sacrifices at the Temple. For those who could not bring their sacrifices with them because of distance, sacrifices could be purchased at the Temple. It is certainly not hard to imagine that these local shepherds, so close to Jerusalem, would be suppliers to the Temple, delivering spotless lambs to the merchants at the Temple. It is not hard to imagine that many of the lambs born at Migdal-eder would have ended up on the altar in Jerusalem.

Here is how Luke described the events in Bethlehem on that first Christmas night:

Luke 2:1-20 (NKJV) And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³ So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. ⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. ⁶ So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. ⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in

swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. 8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 "Glory to God in the highest And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" 15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." 16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. 17 Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. 18 And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart. 20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

The shepherds were stunned! They had been visited by angels. They were told they would find Christ the Lord, the Saviour of the world, the spotless Lamb of God, lying in a manger as a tiny baby!

They had no hesitation. They did not have to ask where to go. There was no confusion in their minds as to where this manger would be. The manger was in the tower of the flock. Migdal-eder. The place where lambs were born! The scripture says they “came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph” and of course “the baby as He lay in the manger”.

The tower they had used as the place of protection and shelter, the place of birth and new life, now housed the very giver of life, the perfect Lamb of God, Jesus the Messiah!

And so it was, that at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, John the Baptist pointed Him out to the crowd and said: “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29,36). Jesus was the one and only, true, spotless Lamb of God, the perfect One, substituting for the imperfect many, His blood being shed to deliver humanity from the ravages of sin and death!

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David the ‘Shepherd King’ prayed this prayer:

Psalm 61:1-4 (NKJV) Hear my cry, O God attend to my prayer. ² From the end of the earth I will cry to You, when my heart is overwhelmed; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. ³ For You have been a shelter for me, A strong tower from the enemy. ⁴ I will abide in Your tabernacle forever; I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. Selah

This prayer is not stale. It is as fresh today as when David first prayed it. It is a prayer we need to pray.

Our God *has* been our refuge. He *has* been our tower of strength. He *has* been our covering, our tent, our refuge when our hearts have been faint.

During this Christmas season, we know where to find God. He is in His tower. The name of the Lord is the strong tower. Calling on His name brings us into the orbit of His strength and power, wisdom and love, healing, deliverance and salvation.

The door is wide open. Come into the tower. No one can defeat those who are in this tower because Jesus is in the tower!